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ABSTRACT

This study investigated high school students' perceptions of becoming an educator, discussing how this plays a role in the conditions of education today. Participants were high school seniors attending the South Texas Independent School District Teacher Academy, which offers students the opportunity for numerous hours of field experience in surrounding schools, opening their eyes to the possibility of becoming teachers. Students completed a two-part questionnaire in January 2002 that focused on personal biographical information and factors influencing the decision to pursue a career in education or the decision to not pursue a career in education. Overall, fewer than one-third of the respondents had ever intended to pursue teaching at the beginning of their freshman year. By the end of their senior year, 60 percent still had no intention of becoming teachers. The field experience helped them realize that they either wanted to pursue a career in education or that teaching was not for them. The main influence in deciding to teach was the responsibility of preparing youth for the future. Most respondents realized that it took a very special person to become a teacher and that teaching was a very rewarding profession. Several respondents believed that teaching was overrated. (SM)

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ABSTRACT

High School Student's Perceptions of Becoming an Educator:

A Case Study in South Texas

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As our nation strives to fill today's classrooms with qualified teachers, Teacher Preparation Programs are reexamining recruitment and retention efforts to help fulfill this demand. The major purpose of this study was to determine high school student's perceptions of becoming an educator and to discuss how this plays a role in our conditions of education today. The group of students who received a two-part questionnaire in January 2002 consisted of high school seniors attending the South Texas Independent School District Teacher Academy in Edinburg, Texas. This study was designed to describe the relative strength of influencing factors in motivating individuals to pursue a career in education. Students who do not intend on becoming a teacher were asked to describe influential factors in helping them to make this decision. An analysis of the data was completed followed by a discussion regarding the recruitment and retention of future educators.

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1

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2

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As teachers, we impact lives and help others see their own potential. In this challenging, yet rewarding profession, we influence America's future. While this does sound like an enormous undertaking, it should be a cry out to our youth to take the challenge and make a difference in our world. So why is our nation having difficulty filling our classrooms with dedicated people who want to make a difference?

The field of Education has changed in dramatic ways in just the last decade and it is continuing to change. The job demands have increased and higher skill requirements have been discussed even among our most experienced teachers. The accountability system, the growing number of children who are identified as special education, the increased number of discipline problems, the lack of parental involvement, the long work hours, the shortened summer break, and the amount of time spent at home for planning and grading are just some of the aspects of teaching that make the job unattractive.

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's future, we will need to hire as many as 2 million teachers over the next decade. The fields of Special Education, Bilingual Education, Mathematics, and Science will have the greatest need for teachers and school reform across America has caused a greater focus on the importance of quality teachers (Malico, 2001).

At a time when educational quality tops the public's list of electoral concerns, classrooms across the U.S. continue to suffer serious teacher shortages (Recruiting New Teachers, 2001). Given the expected increase in public school enrollment, the problem of too few teachers is likely to get far worse before it gets better. According to the U.S. Department of Education, by 2006, America will educate almost three million more children, that is more than 54 million of our youth (RNT, 2001).

To fill the gaps in our classrooms, many teachers teach without the adequate preparation to teach. A report released by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future, September 1996, stated more than 12% of all newly hired teachers enter the workforce without any training. More than 50,000 people enter the teaching profession on emergency or provisional licenses and less than 75% of all teachers have studied child development, learning theories, teaching methods, have degrees in their subject areas, and have passed certification exams. Moreover, nearly one fourth of all secondary level teachers do not have a degree minor in their major teaching field. This holds true for over 30% of all mathematics teachers (RNT, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The South Texas Independent School District is a unique, innovative district operating in a three-county area along the Texas-Mexico border. One of the three magnet schools that opened in 1993 is the Teacher Academy of South Texas. The innovative curriculum offers students the opportunity for numerous hours of field experience in surrounding schools, opening their eyes to the possibility of becoming a teacher.

The purpose of this study was to identify influential factors that motivate high school seniors from the South Texas Independent School District Teacher Academy to pursue a career in education. If a career in education is not desirable, an investigative look at reasons why was added to the study. An examination of the results of the study in regard to the conditions of education today was discussed.

More specifically the study addressed the following questions:

1. What factors influence the decision to pursue a career in education as identified by high school seniors from the South Texas Independent School District Teacher Academy?
2. Are the influential factors identified to not pursue a career in education consistent with reasons why teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years of their careers?
3. What methods can be used to improve recruitment and retention of teachers as identified by the data gathered?

Analysis Of Data

The analysis of the data that follows focuses on the four major areas of the questionnaire: Personal Characteristics, Educational Characteristics, Influencing Factors, and Perceptions of Becoming an Educator. The results of questions listed under Section I, Biographical Information, are presented in a table with frequency counts and percentages. The results of items in Section II, Influencing Factors, are frequency and percentage counts that range in five categories in the following manner: Of Greatest Significance, Of Great Significance, Of Some Significance, Of Little Significance, and Of No Significance. The descriptive statistics results of the questionnaires are in rank order from the greatest influence in pursuing a career in education to the least significance influence.

Personal Biographical Information

The data collected under Biographical Information are grouped into two areas: Personal Background and Educational Background. The data on the Personal Background of high school seniors is presented in the following table. Table 1.1 reports the gender of the respondents. Of

the fifty-two seniors surveyed: 38 (73.1%) were female; 13 (25%) were male; 1 (1.9%) did not respond.

Table 1.1. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of the Gender of High School Seniors From the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy During Spring Semester 2002.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Female	38	73.1
Male	13	25
No Response	1	1.9

The data collected on the Educational Background of the high school seniors is presented in the following four tables.

Table 1.2 reports a yes or no response to whether the students chose the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy because they intended to become a teacher. The frequency and percentages are reported as follows: 16 (30.8%) chose the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy because they intended to become a teacher; 36 (69.2%) had no intentions of becoming a teacher.

Table 1.2. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Yes or No Response in Choosing the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy Because of Intentions To Become A Teacher.

INTENTIONS TO BECOME A TEACHER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	16	30.8
No	36	69.2

Table 1.3 reports a yes or no response to whether there are intentions to enter a Teacher Preparation Program at a university upon graduation from high school. The frequency and percentages are reported as follows: 21 (40.3%) responded yes, they plan on entering a Teacher Preparation Program at a university; 31 (59.6%) responded that they have no intentions on entering a Teacher Preparation Program.

Table 1.3 Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Yes or No Response of Intentions to Enter a Teacher Preparation Program Upon Graduation from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy.

INTENTIONS TO ENTER A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	21	40.3
No	31	59.7

Table 1.4 reports the range of field experience hours completed thus far in their senior year. The frequency and percentages range is as follows: 52 (100%) of the respondents reported that they had completed over 58 hours of field experience this school year.

Table 1.4 Frequency Distribution and Percentages on The Range of Field Experience Hours thus far in the Student's Senior Year at the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy.

RANGE OF FIELD EXPERIENCE HOURS	FEQUENCY	PERCENT
<9	0	0
10-25	0	0
26-41	0	0
42-57	0	0
58+	52	100

Table 1.5 reports the career choices of all students who do not plan to pursue a career in education. The frequency and percentages are as follows: 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue an Art degree; 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue an Architecture degree; 6 (11.5%) want to pursue a degree in Business; 1(1.9%) wants to pursue a career in Culinary Arts; 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue a Communications degree; 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue a degree in cinematography; 3 (5.8%) want to pursue a degree in Computer Engineering; 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue a degree in Fashion Design; 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue a Journalism degree; 2 (3.8%) want to pursue careers as Lawyers; 5 (9.6%) want to pursue a career in the Medical field; 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue a Ministry career;

1 (1.9%) wants to pursue a degree in Music; 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue a degree in Psychology; 1 (1.9%) wants to pursue a degree in Speech Therapy; 4 (7.7%) are undecided in career choices.

Table 1.5. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of the Career Choices Other Than Education that the Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy Want To Pursue

CAREERS OF CHOICE	FREQUENCY	DISTRIBUTION
Art	1	1.9
Architecture	1	1.9
Business	6	11.5
Culinary Arts	1	1.9
Communications	1	1.9
Cinematography	1	1.9
Computer Engineering	3	5.8
Fashion Design	1	1.9
Journalism	1	1.9
Law	2	3.8
Medicine	5	9.6
Ministry	1	1.9
Music	1	1.9
Psychology	1	1.9
Speech Therapy	1	1.9
Undecided	4	7.7

Summary of Biographical Information

As a magnet school for future teachers it was found that of the 52 seniors, less than one third ever had intentions of pursuing a teaching career at the beginning of their freshman year. By the end of their senior year, still roughly 60% have no intentions of pursuing an education degree even though they all completed well over 58 hours of field experience. It was found that some of the students who originally wanted to become a teacher changed their minds, while others decided to become a teacher though they originally did not intend to. Other career options that appeared more appealing to the respondents included careers in business and medicine. These issues are discussed further in the analysis of Section II on the survey.

Influencing Factors Data

Research Question #1

What factors influence the decision to pursue a degree in education as identified by high school seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy?

The data collected in Section II of the questionnaire concerned the factors that influence the high school seniors from the Teacher Academy to pursue a degree in education. The respondents were asked to answer the questions by circling the number on the Likert scale that offered five possible choices: Of Greatest Significance, Of Great Significance, Of Some Significance, Of Little Significance, and of No Significance.

The data is presented in the following tables.

Table 2.1 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of encouragement from family, friends, and/or a former teacher relative to their influence in pursuing a career in education. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance10 (19.2%), Of Great Significance 5 (9.6%), Of Some Significance 4 (7.7%), Of Little Significance 0 (0%), Of No Significance 2 (3.8%).

Table 2.1. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: Encouragement from family, friends, and/or a former teacher

ENCOURAGEMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	10	47.6
Of Great Significance	5	23.8
Of Some Significance	4	19
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	2	9.5
Total	21	100

Table 2.2 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of their personal perception that they possessed skills needed to be an effective schoolteacher. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance 9 (42.9%), Of Great Significance 4 (19%), Of Some Significance 5 (23.8%), Of Little Significance 2 (9.5%), and Of No Significance 1 (4.8%).

Table 2.2. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: Personal Perception that you possessed the skills needed to be an effective schoolteacher

PERSONAL PERCEPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	9	42.9
Of Great Significance	4	19
Of Some Significance	5	23.8
Of Little Significance	2	9.5
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.3 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of the opportunity to be creative relative to the desire to pursue a career in education. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance 8 (38%), Of Great Significance 7 (33.3%), Of Some Significance 1 (4.8%), Of Little Significance 2 (9.5%), and Of No Significance 2 (9.5%).

Table 2.3. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The opportunity to be creative

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVITY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	8	38
Of Great Significance	7	33.3
Of Some Significance	1	4.8
Of Little Significance	2	9.5
Of No Significance	2	9.5
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.4 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of the enjoyment of working with children relative to the influence in pursuing a career in education. The frequency and percentages are as follows: Of Greatest Significance 12 (57.1%), Of Great Significance 7 (33.3%), Of No Significance 1 (4.8%). Non-response to the item was 1 (1.9%).

Table 2.4. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The enjoyment of working with people

ENJOYMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	12	57.1
Of Great Significance	7	33.3
Of Some Significance	0	0
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.5illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of the school year academic calendar relative to the influence in pursuing a career in education. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance 6 (28.6%), Of Great Significance 2 (9.5%), Of Some Significance 7 (33.3%), Of Little Significance 3 (14.3%), and Of No Significance 2 (9.5%). Non-response to the item was 1 (4.8%).

Table 2.5. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The school year academic calendar

ACADEMIC CALENDAR	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	6	28.6
Of Great Significance	2	9.5
Of Some Significance	7	33.3
Of Little Significance	3	14.3
Of No Significance	2	9.5
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.6 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of the desire to impact lives relative to the influence of pursuing a career in education. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance 15 (71.4%), Of Great Significance 4 (19%), and Of No Significance 1 (4.8%). Non-response to the item was 1 (1.9%).

Table 2.6. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The desire to impact lives

IMPACT LIVES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	15	71.4
Of Great Significance	4	19
Of Some Significance	0	0
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.7 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of the need for job security, fringe benefits, and/or salary scale relative to the influence in pursuing a career in education. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance 9 (42.9%), Of Great Significance 4 (19%), Of Some Significance 4 (19%), Of Little Significance 1 (4.8%), and Of No Significance 2 (9.5%).

Table 2.7. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The need for job security, fringe benefits, and/or salary scale

JOB SECURITY, BENEFITS, & SALARY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	9	42.9
Of Great Significance	4	19
Of Some Significance	4	19
Of Little Significance	1	4.8
Of No Significance	2	9.5
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.8 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of the sense of accomplishment when a student has shown progression relative to the influence to pursue a career in education. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance 15 (71.4%), Of Great Significance 3 (14.3%), Of Some Significance 1 (4.8%), and Of No Significance 1 (4.8%). Non-response to the item was 1 (4.8%).

Table 2.8. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in response to: The sense of accomplishment when a student has shown progression

SENSE OF ACCOMPLISMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	15	71.4
Of Great Significance	3	14.3
Of Some significance	1	4.8
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.9 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of the feeling of freedom and independence to make your own decisions relative to the influence in pursuing a career in education. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance 12 (57.1%), Of Great Significance 5 (23.8%), Of Some Significance 2 (9.5%), and Of No Significance 1 (4.8%). Non-response to the item was 1 (4.8%).

Table 2.9. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in response to: The feeling of freedom and independence to make your own decisions

INDEPENDENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	12	57.1
Of Great Significance	5	23.8
Of Some Significance	2	9.5
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.10 illustrates the frequencies and percentages of the respondents regarding the strength of the responsibility of preparing youth for the future relative to the influence of pursuing a career in education. The frequency and percentages were as follows: Of Greatest Significance 17 (81%), Of Great Significance 1 (4.8%), Of Some Significance 1 (4.8%), and Of No Significance 1 (4.8%). Non-response to the item was 1 (4.8%).

Table 2.10. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The responsibility of preparing youth for the future

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	17	81
Of Great Significance	1	4.8
Of Some Significance	1	4.8
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Summary of Data

The greatest significant factor in the decision to pursue a career in education was the responsibility of preparing youth for the future with 81% of the respondents rating this on the scale. The second most significant factors were the desire to impact lives and the sense of

accomplishment when a student has shown progression with 71.4% of the respondents rating these as one of the greatest factors. The third most significant factors were the enjoyment of working with people and the feeling of freedom and independence to make your own decisions with 57.1% of the respondents rating these as one of the greatest factors in influencing the decision to pursue a career in education.

Based on this case study, students who have received a great deal of firsthand teaching experience view teaching as an opportunity to make a difference in our world by impacting lives and getting a lot of self gratification from it.

In addition to responding to items 1-10 the students were asked to include any other factors that have influenced their decision to pursue a career in education. Many of the students attributed their field experience, a component of the Career Education course they take as upper classman at the Teacher Academy. From field experience placements, several students have recognized the need for quality teachers in our schools and believe that their experience has given them the confidence to fulfill that role. It was expressed that field experience gave them an opportunity to learn what teaching is all about. The respondents stated that during field experience they were given the opportunity to observe classes, to work with teachers, and to work with children. These experiences gave them a deeper understanding of the teaching profession.

Students who responded in the survey that they were not going to pursue a career in education were asked to respond to 3 questions, numbers 13-15 in the survey. In response to item 13: What has been the greatest influence on you to pursue a career other than in education? An overwhelming response stated that field experience helped them to see that teaching was not for them. They recognize the need for patience in working with today's youth and they see

teaching as a very monotonous type of profession. The students also expressed a perception that too many education courses are required from Teacher Preparation Programs. Many students have also been exposed to other career opportunities through their own families, teachers, and work experience as a high school student. This exposure, coupled with their field experience, has encouraged the respondents to pursue other career options. The respondents also have a perception that teachers receive little compensation, influencing them to pursue other careers.

In response to item 14: What role has society played in influencing your decision to pursue another career? The majority of the students felt that society played a big role in their decision to pursue other careers. Overall, the stereotype of a teacher has negatively influenced the decision to become a teacher. Respondents recognize that society and the media report on the negative issues in teaching. Many discussed lawsuits and school violence as top story headlines affecting the teaching profession. There is an understanding that even the most troubled youth must attend school, making the task of teaching these children or adolescents too difficult to consider.

Teaching is thought of as a very challenging job among the respondents. With all of the emphasis on technology, such as computers and video games, there is a view among the respondents that it is very hard to reach the children in today's world. It was stated that it would be difficult to stimulate children in the classroom. A great number of the respondents also stated that our society is very materialistic. There is a great deal of emphasis on making a lot of money. There seems to be a lot of exposure to other careers that will help a person become rich. Perhaps that is the reason many of the respondents want to pursue a career in business or medicine.

Only a few of the respondents said that society has very little influence on their decision to pursue careers other than in education.

In response to item 15: What is your perception of being an educator? The majority of the students recognize that it takes a very special person to become a teacher and that teaching is a very rewarding profession. Teaching is seen as a very important career because teachers impact lives. Teachers are seen as people who have patience, are dedicated, and love children. However, several of the respondents think teaching is overrated. It is believed that teachers work too hard and they are under-appreciated. It was discussed that there is too much pressure on teachers and there are not many benefits in teaching. The respondents also recognize the responsibility in building character in students. It was stated that teachers don't just teach, they have to prepare people to live in our society.

Conclusions

Research Question #2: Are the influencing factors identified to not pursue a career in education consistent with reasons why teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years of their careers?

The respondents in this study have a great deal of knowledge under their belt about the teaching profession. It is clear that field experience helped them come to the realization that they indeed want to pursue a career in education or it helped them to realize that teaching was not for them. Teacher Preparation Programs across the nation offer their pre-service teachers field experience to help them make connections between theory and practice, to give them experience in the classroom, and to provide guidance before they become the teacher. However, many of our pre-service teachers realize that teaching is not for them when it is almost too late to change

majors. The result is that we have a lot of beginning teachers leaving the profession within the first 5 years of teaching.

It has been estimated that as many as half of all teachers who enter the teaching profession leave within their first five years (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). Moreover, about 75 percent of students in teacher preparation programs apply for teaching jobs, and just under 60 percent actually receive teaching positions (Yasin, 1999-12-00). Foster (2001) describes the daily routine of a young teacher. She leaves her school campus at 6:35 p.m. (picked by her husband in their only vehicle) and arrives at home at 7:00 p.m. In their $900.00 studio apartment she continues to grade assignments. At 9:30 p.m. this young teacher with a master's degree has "logged more than a 12 hour day and has organized, assembled, and presented more information than a typical executive at a Fortune 500 company (Foster, 2001, p.2)." All this for roughly $15.00 an hour.

Foster (2001) describes another young teacher who became a statistic when he left the teaching profession to become a firefighter. A combination of factors drove him to pursue another career. These included an overall lack of respect for teachers, a sense of isolation, lack of camaraderie among teachers, the 15-hour workday, having to be a disciplinarian and then feeling fear of being subpoenaed.

Enthusiastic new teachers enter teaching because they want to impact lives. Young talented recent graduates are willing to make sacrifices and live on teachers pay. However, at what point does the enthusiasm begin to wear off? The "revolving door" effect is causing large numbers of teachers to leave their jobs due to job-dissatisfaction (Foster, 2001). In fact, only a few remain classroom teachers for the duration of their careers. While some stay in education as administrators, or to serve in some other capacity, others leave the profession all together.

"Teachers become frustrated by poor salaries, little administrative support, bureaucratic decision making and discipline problems (Foster, 2001, p.4)."

Research Question #3: What methods can be used to improve the recruitment and retention of future teachers as identified by the data gathered?

According to the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 2001, recruiting, preparing and retaining quality teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools. The idea of a magnet high school for teachers is creative and may help our nation to fill the gaps with highly motivated, bright individuals who are sure that teaching is what they want to do. Offering field experience to high school students is an innovative way to expose our youth to the teaching profession. More teacher magnet schools would improve our recruitment of future teachers into Teacher Preparation Programs.

"Since education is competing with other careers for bright, dedicated people, districts have a responsibility to do the best job possible to attract strong candidates and support them in becoming highly qualified teachers (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001, p.2)." To positively impact the retention of teachers, methods of support should include assignments of mentors to new teachers, opportunities for professional growth, orientation programs, and administrative support (NCREL, 2001).

The findings of this study are in close alignment with what research shows. There are both advantages and disadvantages to choosing the teaching profession. Teaching is rewarding and satisfying, but not easy work. Compared to other professions, teachers have longer vacations, but less pay and lack of opportunity for advancement. The teaching day is shorter, but much paperwork is completed at home. These findings are important to all teacher educators. The more pre-service teachers know about the teaching profession and its theoretical base, the

more empowered they will be in the classroom. Pre-service teachers will have a clearer understanding of what they are getting into and will less likely abandon ship. Finally, teacher education programs should help clarify the realities of teaching to those that lack a realistic view of teaching (Vaisanen, 1999).

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Table 1.1. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of the Gender of High School Seniors From the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy During Spring Semester 2002.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Female	38	73.1
Male	13	25
No Response	1	1.9

Table 1.2. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Yes or No Response in Choosing the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy Because of Intentions To Become A Teacher.

INTENTIONS TO BECOME A TEACHER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	16	30.8
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Table 1.3 Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Yes or No Response of Intentions to Enter a Teacher Preparation Program Upon Graduation from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy.

INTENTIONS TO ENTER A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	21	40.3
No	31	59.7

Table 1.4 Frequency Distribution and Percentages on The Range of Field Experience Hours thus far in the Student's Senior Year at the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy.

RANGE OF FIELD EXPERIENCE HOURS	FEQUENCY	PERCENT
<9	0	0
10-25	0	0
26-41	0	0
42-57	0	0
58+	52	100

Table 1.5. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of the Career Choices Other Than Education that the Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy Want To Pursue

CAREERS OF CHOICE	FREQUENCY	DISTRIBUTION
Art	1	1.9
Architecture	1	1.9
Business	6	11.5
Culinary Arts	1	1.9
Communications	1	1.9
Cinematography	1	1.9
Computer Engineering	3	5.8
Fashion Design	1	1.9
Journalism	1	1.9
Law	2	3.8
Medicine	5	9.6
Ministry	1	1.9
Music	1	1.9
Psychology	1	1.9
Speech Therapy	1	1.9
Undecided	4	7.7

Table 2.1. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: Encouragement from family, friends, and/or a former teacher

ENCOURAGEMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	10	47.6
Of Great Significance	5	23.8
Of Some Significance	4	19
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	2	9.5
Total	21	100

Table 2.2. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: Personal Perception that you possessed the skills needed to be an effective schoolteacher

PERSONAL PERCEPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	9	42.9
Of Great Significance	4	19
Of Some Significance	5	23.8
Of Little Significance	2	9.5
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.3. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The opportunity to be creative

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVITY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	8	38
Of Great Significance	7	33.3
Of Some Significance	1	4.8
Of Little Significance	2	9.5
Of No Significance	2	9.5
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.4. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The enjoyment of working with people

ENJOYMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	12	57.1
Of Great Significance	7	33.3
Of Some Significance	0	0
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.4. Frequency Distribution and Percentages of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The enjoyment of working with people

ENJOYMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	12	57.1
Of Great Significance	7	33.3
Of Some Significance	0	0
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.5. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The school year academic calendar

ACADEMIC CALENDAR	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	6	28.6
Of Great Significance	2	9.5
Of Some Significance	7	33.3
Of Little Significance	3	14.3
Of No Significance	2	9.5
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.6. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The desire to impact lives

IMPACT LIVES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	15	71.4
Of Great Significance	4	19
Of Some Significance	0	0
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.7. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The need for job security, fringe benefits, and/or salary scale

JOB SECURITY, BENEFITS, & SALARY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	9	42.9
Of Great Significance	4	19
Of Some Significance	4	19
Of Little Significance	1	4.8
Of No Significance	2	9.5
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.8. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in response to: The sense of accomplishment when a student has shown progression

SENSE OF ACCOMPLISMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	15	71.4
Of Great Significance	3	14.3
Of Some significance	1	4.8
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.9. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in response to: The feeling of freedom and independence to make your own decisions

INDEPENDENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	12	57.1
Of Great Significance	5	23.8
Of Some Significance	2	9.5
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

Table 2.10. Frequency and Distribution of High School Seniors from the South Texas I.S.D. Teacher Academy in Response to: The responsibility of preparing youth for the future

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Of Greatest Significance	17	81
Of Great Significance	1	4.8
Of Some Significance	1	4.8
Of Little Significance	0	0
Of No Significance	1	4.8
Total Responses	20	95.2
Non-Response	1	4.8
Total	21	100

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